
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
16 JANUARY 2013

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Burke
The Sheriff, Councillor White
Councillors Baillie, Barnes-Andrews, Mrs Blatchford, Bogle, Chaloner, Claisse, Cunio, Daunt, Fitzhenry, Furnell, Hannides, B Harris, L Harris, Inglis, Jeffery, Keogh, Kolker, Laming, Lewzey, Lloyd, Mead, McEwing, Mintoff, Morrell, Moulton, Noon, Norris, Parnell, Payne, Pope, Shields, Smith, Spicer, Stevens, Thomas, Thorpe, Tucker, Turner, Vassiliou, Vinson, Whitbread and Dr R Williams

88. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kaur, Letts, Dr D. Paffey and Rayment.

89. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The report of the Cabinet Member for Resources was submitted regarding the Local Council Tax Support Scheme to replace the current Council Tax Benefit for April next year (copy of report circulated with the agenda and appended to signed minutes).

With the consent of the meeting, Councillor Dr. Williams altered and moved the recommendations contained within the report and Councillor Stevens seconded:

Delete Recommendation (ii):

- (ii) Option 1 - the Southampton City Council 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme' as set out in Appendix 1 (the default scheme) with the amendments set out in Appendix 2a, which is designed to achieve a self-funding position.

AMENDED Recommendations to read:

- (i) To note and consider the responses from the consultation process and the equalities impact assessment as set out in Appendices 3 and 4.
- (ii) To approve Option 2
 - a. for the year 2013/14 the Southampton City 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme' as set out in Appendix 1 (the default scheme) with the amendments set out in Appendix 2b, which is designed to comply with the transitional grant conditions and which will require additional Council funding of £720,400
and
 - b. for the year 2014/15 and subsequent years the Southampton City Council 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme' as set out in Appendix 1 (the default scheme) with the amendments set out in Appendix 2a, which is designed to achieve a self-funding position.

- (iii) To approve that, should option 2 be adopted, provision for the additional cost of £720,400 must be made in the 2013/14 budget agreed by Full Council at its meeting on 13th February 2013.
- (iv) To delegate authority to the Head of Finance and IT following consultation with the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services and the Cabinet Member for Resources to adopt the Southampton City Council 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme' based on the preferred option selected by Council (Option 2 above) by 31st January 2013 and to make any subsequent changes necessary to the adopted Scheme to give effect to the requirements of any Act, Regulations or Statutory Guidance enacted or published after the date of adoption.
- (v) That any scheme adopted is reviewed by the Head of Finance and IT following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources for subsequent financial years, and that recommendations for any substantive changes are brought back to Full Council for approval.
- (vi) That it be noted that all current claimants would be sent a letter following the Southampton Scheme being approved setting out how the change affects them and offering payment options.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE ALTERATION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED WERE APPROVED

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the responses from the consultation process and the equalities impact assessment as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 of the report be noted;
- (ii) That Option 2 be approved:
 - a. for the year 2013/14 the Southampton City Council 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme' as set out in Appendix 1 to the report (the default scheme) with the amendments set out in Appendix 2b to the report, which is designed to comply with the transitional grant conditions and which will require additional Council funding of £720,400
 - and
 - b. for the year 2014/15 and subsequent years the Southampton City Council 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report (the default scheme) with the amendments set out in Appendix 2a to the report, which is designed to achieve a self-funding position.
- (iii) That provision for the additional cost of £720,400 to be made in the 2013/14 budget and to be agreed by Full Council at its meeting on 13th February 2013 be approved;
- (iv) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Finance and IT following consultation with the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services and the Cabinet Member for Resources to adopt the Southampton City Council 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme' based on the preferred option selected by

Council (Option 2 above) by 31st January 2013 and to make any subsequent changes necessary to the adopted Scheme to give effect to the requirements of any Act, Regulations or Statutory Guidance enacted or published after the date of adoption.

- (v) That any scheme adopted be reviewed by the Head of Finance and IT following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources for subsequent financial years, and that recommendations for any substantive changes are brought back to Full Council for approval.
- (vi) That it be noted that all current claimants would be sent a letter following the Southampton Scheme being approved setting out how the change affects them and offering payment options.

NOTE: Councillors Inglis, Mintoff, Pope, Thomas and Turner declared disclosable pecuniary interests in the above matter, as beneficiaries under the council tax support scheme and remained in the meeting due to the granting of a dispensation to members by the Monitoring Officer dated 20th December 2012, to allow members to vote on certain matters likely to materially affect all members equally or affect members in common with other city residents.

90. COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS FOR PERSONS OVER THE AGE OF 65 AND SPECIAL CONSTABLES

The report of the Cabinet Member for Resources was submitted updating Council Policy in regard to the Older Persons council tax discount and the discount for Special Constables from 1 April 2013 (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

Amendment moved by Councillor Vinson and seconded by Councillor Turner:

Delete Recommendations (d) and (e):

- d) Updates the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme and reduces the level of reduction in respect of the “pensioners” element to zero.
- e) Updates the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme and reduces the level of reduction in respect of the “Special Constable” element to zero.

AMENDED Recommendations to read:

- a) Notes and considers the responses from the consultation process and the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in paragraphs 7 to 13 and Appendix 1.
- b) Applies any changes resulting from an update of the Council Tax reduction scheme in respect of the “pensioners” element of the Scheme, to all persons who meet the current qualifying criteria which is that it is available to persons who are:-
 - (a) liable to pay Council Tax either jointly or in their own right, by being an owner occupier or a tenant of a dwelling within Southampton, which is their sole or main residence;
 - (b) aged 65 or over and all other residents of the household are 65 or over;and

- c) not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.
- c) Applies any changes resulting from an update of the Council Tax reduction scheme in respect of the “Special Constable” element of the Scheme, to all persons who meet the current qualifying criteria which is that it is available to persons who are:-
 - (a) Special Constables; and
 - (b) reside in a property within Southampton where there is a liability for Council Tax and serve as a Special Constable within Southampton.
- d) Updates the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme and reduces the level of reduction in respect of the “pensioners” element from 10% to 5% from 1 April 2013 and from 5% to zero from 1 April 2014.
- e) Updates the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme and reduces the level of reduction in respect of the “Special Constable” element from 100% to 50% from 1 April 2013 and from 50% to zero from 1 April 2014.
- f) Authorises the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to take any further action necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE AMENDMENT WAS DECLARED LOST

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS WERE APPROVED

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the responses from the consultation process and the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in paragraphs 7 to 13 and Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (ii) That any changes resulting from an update of the Council Tax reduction scheme in respect of the “pensioners” element of the Scheme be applied to all persons who meet the current qualifying criteria which is that it is available to persons who are:-
 - (a) liable to pay Council Tax either jointly or in their own right, by being an owner occupier or a tenant of a dwelling within Southampton, which is their sole or main residence;
 - (b) aged 65 or over and all other residents of the household are 65 or over; and
 - (c) not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.
- (iii) That any changes resulting from an update of the Council Tax reduction scheme in respect of the “Special Constable” element of the Scheme, be applied to all persons who meet the current qualifying criteria which is that it is available to persons who are:-
 - (a) Special Constables; and
 - (b) reside in a property within Southampton where there is a liability for Council Tax and serve as a Special Constable within Southampton
- (iv) That the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme be updated and the level of reduction in respect of the “pensioners” element be reduced to zero

(v) That the current discretionary Council Tax reduction scheme be updated and the level of reduction in respect of the “Special Constable” element be reduced to zero; and

(vi) That the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) be authorised to take any further action necessary to give effect to the recommendations in the report.

NOTE: Councillors Cunio, B. Harris, L.Harris, Lloyd, Norris, Parnell, Turner, Vinson and White declared disclosable pecuniary interests in the above matter, as pensioners in the City and remained in the meeting due to the granting of a dispensation to members by the Monitoring Officer dated 20th December 2012, to allow members to vote on certain matters likely to materially affect all members equally or affect members in common with other city residents.

91. DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS FOR SECOND HOMES AND EMPTY PROPERTIES

The report of the Cabinet Member for Resources was submitted seeking approval of the policy for discounts for empty homes, long term empty homes and second homes to be implemented from 1 April 2013 (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the policy that the empty homes discount is left at 100% for Class C empty properties but that the discount is reduced from six months to one month from 1 April 2013, be approved.
- (ii) That the policy that the empty homes discount is reduced from 100% to 50% for Class A empty properties from 1 April 2013, be approved.
- (iii) That the introduction of a long term empty properties premium set at 50% from 1 April 2013, be approved.
- (iv) That the removal of the second home discount so that Council Tax will be payable in full on these properties from 1 April 2013, be approved.
- (v) That the introduction of discretionary hardship support under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 with effect from 1 April 2013 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
- (vi) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources to approve the NNDR 1 return for the City Council from 2013/14 and for future years.

NOTE: Councillors Baillie, Barnes-Andrews, Claisse, Fitzhenry, Hannides, Kolker, Smith, Dr. Williams and White declared disclosable pecuniary interests in the above matter, as multiple home owners in the City and remained in the meeting due to the granting of a dispensation to members by the Monitoring Officer dated 20th December 2012, to allow members to vote on certain matters likely to materially affect all members equally or affect members in common with other city residents.

92. REGIONAL GROWTH FUND BID TO SUPPORT BUSINESS START UPS AND GROWTH

The report of the Cabinet Member for Communities was submitted seeking approval for revenue expenditure of £2 million for the project to support business set ups and growth (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, revenue expenditure of £2 million for the project be approved; and
- (ii) that the risk that the Council may be liable to repay funding to the Regional Growth Fund under the claw back arrangements, and that such claw back may be a cost to the City Council, as set out in paragraph 13 of the report, be accepted.

93. LARGE CASINO - DRAFT APPLICATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR CONSULTATION

The report of the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services was submitted detailing the process for determining a Large Casino Premises Licence and seeking approval for the draft evaluation criteria for consultation (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the process to be followed for determining the large casino licence be noted;
- (ii) That the draft evaluation criteria for consultation, the final version of which is to be used at Stage 2 of the large casino licence process be approved, subject to any further minor alterations being made by the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services following consultation with the Leader of the Council; and
- (iii) That the consultation results and revised criteria (if any) be considered for adoption by Council at its meeting on 20th March 2013.

94. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The report of the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services was submitted regarding the appointment of an Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

- (i) That the appointment of Dawn Baxendale to the position of Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service at Southampton City Council from 1st March 2013 be approved; and

- (ii) That the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to take any further action necessary to give effect to the contents of the report.